

REMARKS OF MAJOR GENERAL BASILIO J. VALDES
CHIEF OF STAFF, PHILIPPINE ARMY ON THE
OCCASION OF THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE
MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINING CENTER
AT CAMP MURPHY, 10 A.M., 4 NOVEMBER 1945

During the days of development of the National Defense program in the States, prior to the outbreak of war, it became apparent to those charged with responsibility for building the greatest Air Force the world has ever known that great numbers of pilots, bombardiers, and navigators would have to be trained to man the unprecedented fleet of airplanes even then under construction. It was also apparent that requirements for admission to such training could not be maintained at the somewhat arbitrary level then in existence and still make it possible to supply the numbers of men needed for the vast aircrew training program. Two years of college training had been regarded as a necessary prerequisite to undertaking pilot training. This was all well and good so long as the supply of applicants far exceeded the demand for trained men; in the pre-war years "many were called but few were chosen." From 1928 to 1939 nearly 6000 American cadets entered into training and only 2328 became rated pilots. During these eleven years, then, only two cadets in five graduated and received their wings.

After 1939, the demand went up sharply and the Air Force had to begin to worry about the wastage of manpower produced by the use of arbitrary standards. Perhaps a lot of men not having two years of college in their background could be made into good pilots. Perfect physical specimens were still needed to cope with the

stresses and strains of flying -- no one ever doubted that -- but perhaps flying aptitude was not something coming primarily out of a classroom; perhaps a minimum of academic background and a maximum of the basic capacities of coordination, judgment, emotional stability, and sharpness of observation were needed. A group of psychologists in the States, who had spent years studying these things, believed this was the case and offered their services in the construction and application of a battery of aptitude tests to screen for the desired capacities.

The Army decided to take a chance. We now know it wasn't really taking a chance for there is no other sensible way to go about solving the problem. And the experiment has paid off with big dividends -- in instructors, planes, and equipment saved, in accidents prevented, more important still, in saving of time and personnel which would have been wasted trying to teach inept boys to become combat pilots.

The history of the technical development of the tests, the making of exhaustive analysis of the jobs of aircrew members, the administrative snags that had to be cleared away -- this is a long and interesting story which it would be inappropriate to go into here. Suffice it to say that very satisfactory tests indeed were developed and that they "paid off" handsomely. The elimination rate in training was reduced from the pre-war 60% to a low of 12% at the height of the pilot production program, while the rates for navigator and bombardier training became practically inconsiderable. Much of this gain was due, of course, to improved

training methods and equipment but no one doubts that a large share was due to better selection and more fitting classification of personnel. The figures, if you could examine them as I have, you would find very imposing. During the experimental period at the beginning, when the Army attitude necessarily had to be one of "show me!", a period in which all physically qualified applicants were allowed to enter training regardless of their scores on the tests, a follow-up in the Training Command showed that less than 4% of the men scoring highest on the tests had been eliminated in flying training while 65% of the lowest scoring cadets had already been "washed out". This was good enough for the Army -- there was no longer any doubt that the screening methods were paying off. They were immediately adopted and, from the middle part of 1942 on, they have constituted the official selection procedure of the U. S. Army Air Forces. As the work went on the battery of tests was steadily improved until, at present, it has a very high predictive power indeed.

If there has been some doubt as to whether the atomic bomb secret should be shared with our allies there never has been any concerning sharing personnel selection methods. The British Royal Air Force, finding the American methods so much more effective than its own, adopted the tests; The Royal Australian Air Force did the same. With the termination of the successful action in North Africa a mission was sent to Algiers to institute the system in the training of the Free French; it is now in operation in Paris. Chinese Air Force students, arriving in California for

American training, were screened with the tests. Mexican candidates have been required to demonstrate their aptitude prior to entering training. Arrangements have just recently been completed to institute the system in Brazil. And now, at the first opportunity, the tests have been brought to the Philippines where this model Examining Center at Camp Murphy will serve as the pattern for all selection in the Archipelago.

With the tremendous task of reconstruction facing us, and even now going on, we must do everything possible to economize on resources. No wasteful methods can be tolerated. We cannot afford to enter into training for the Philippine Air Force anyone who does not have an excellent chance of successfully completing the training course. We are confident that the aptitude testing methods to be used in this Center, themselves having been subjected to rigorous tests in the examination of over half a million men in the United States and never found wanting, will permit us to build on a sound foundation of personnel selection and classification.

We are appreciative of the high motives which have brought this valuable service to us and pledge ourselves to the effective continuation of the work begun. We are aware of our responsibility not only to preserve the objectivity and impartiality of the selection system but also, through continuous psychological research, to improve the methods as new contingencies arise and new knowledge is gained. It is a pleasure for me to be able to announce that a distinguished psychologist has come to this

country at the request of the Philippine Army Headquarters to organize this valuable service. He is Colonel Frank A. Geldard, Air Corps, Army of the United States, Professor of Psychology, University of Virginia. Under him are all psychological research units and psychological sections of all Medical and Psychological Examining Units in the United States. Upon his arrival in Manila he immediately set out to look for the available persons who may be interested in this type of work. Through him we were able to obtain the valuable services of a well known Filipino psychologist, Professor Isidoro Panlasigui, Head of the Department of Psychology of the University of the Philippines. Professor Panlasigui has taken an active interest in this venture and will assume, upon the return to the United States of our American friends, the active Directorship of the psychological work of this Center. The aid and the encouragement of the Philippine Army are his; we look for a brilliant future in research and service for this Center. To Colonel Geldard and his assistants, I want to express the gratitude of the Philippine Army and the Filipino people for their disinterested work in behalf of our Air Corps.